#### CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THE SEASON'S LATEST BOOKS

Mystery Tale Competition In Which Younger Writers Keep On Vigorously.

C. Moffett, G. Morris, O. Johnson and Miss Wells All Try Their Hand.

Cruel Tragedy by W. J. Locke-Wanderings In the Realms of Fiction.

dicious if Mr. Locke had selected for

is a slight matter, for their trades have

actor is delightful in his tenderness for

the girl and his friend; the journalist

suffers, for the author counts on his wrong

headedness and dulness of perception.

The woman who ruins his life would

seem incredible if the English police

slavey, however, the author has bor-

ing the awakening of his dream prin-

justify seriously. Elemental passions

and the primitive justice of the under-

world are all very well in their way.

Tales of Adventure.

taken by the hero and the heroine of

cident. First the ship was sunk and

S.R. Crockett Author of 'Patay'

however, which crumbled away and

destroyed their boat, but they swam to

a derelict drifting by, outlived a ty-

cisco with the cargo of coal on fire. The

"The Impossible Hoy"

strolling bear leaders from the country

New York city, and still more that

roads of Connecticut and Westchester

half way through.

the Golden Gate" (E. J. Clode,

The trip from Japan to San Francisco

muted in Mr. Locke's crucible.

than journalism and acting,

nothing to do with the story.

The philosopher who will not accept for he has taken a serious turn and chance as an explanation and who dis- when his humor does crop out it strikes trusts coincidence may be able to deter- a discord as often as not. mine the reason for the appearance this impossible that the artist who created year of tales of mystery, whether in the Aristide Pujol could mar the story he form of detective stories or not, by is trying to tell by the crude methods nearly every author of the younger of melodrama. The keynote for each generation whose name has become character save one, who is completely familiar to the public through meritorious work in other lines. A dozen or fests itself in two cases very charmsuch books have been noticed in ingly, but in all the others in pretty TUE SUN in the past few months, several conventional ways. others are accounted for below and doubtless more will come. Spontaneous bedridden child, the young men who combustion is out of the question; can hold her by their fancies in a fairythey all have been studying the didactic land of Illusions and the gener dissections by college professors of spiracy to keep from her all knowlstories as a form of literature or is edge of the sorrow and wrong of the there a secret agreement to compete world. It might have been more ju-for some prize? At any rate they are dicious if Mr. Locke had selected for all demonstrating in print the convic- these youths less confining professions tion that any one can write a mystery story as good as any by, if not Poe or Gaboriau, at least the Arsene Lupin man or Anna Katharine Green. The epi-demic is so widespread that we half fear we may have detective stories before long from Mrs. Wilkins Freeman, Mrs. Humphry Ward or Mrs. Wharton. We begin this week with the copart-

Moffett in "The Bishop's Purse" (Apa title unfortunately reminiscent of H. MacGrath. It opens boldly with a theft by a young woman and the forced concealment of the object stolen; it then turns in so far as concerns the mystery into a hunt for the object, folled by ingenious incidents till the end. An intelligently constructed criminal story, although the woman thief is generally repulsive, whether in literature or on the At the start the reader is in doubt about her; she may be a lady with some unexplained motive for the action, but she soon shows that she is merely the common professional thief. The authors are not content with this; they need padding to fill out the volume and this takes the form of describing the doings at a country house of a swarm of poor relatives, who sponge on a rich and uneducated American. This gives the chance for much humor, some of it bright, and for a love affair. It dilutes the criminal potion wofully and spoils the story. There is nothing to distinguish one author from the other in the writing, nor for that matter from any one else who can write good English. The story is readable.

The delightful persistence of the American girl in doing what she is told but fairyland is no place for them. not to do is impressed on the reader of The result is that whatever character Governor Morris's "The Penalty" (Charles the hero and heroine may have is wiped Scribner's Sons), a venture on un-known seas that will be regretted by arotesque fate, and only the observant admirers of the author's good work. lovers, the actor and the slum girl, are She is the lovable and enchanting human, in spite of their deluded idea hereine of all summer remances, with a of self-sacrifice. There is no sense of taste for sculpture added, and insists on taking for a model a legless Quilp preaching the gospel of love, but he is far more repulsive than that gentleman. as cruel as one who wantomy destroys He is not only the embodiment of all a child's playhouse. that is evil but is also the "man higher! whom the District Attorney is hunting for, the controller of all the wrongdoing in New York. The reading of the daily newspapers has stimulated William Brown Meloney's "The Girl of Mr. Morris's imagination to extraordinary ideas regarding the possibilities of York) was certainly not lacking in incrime when thoroughly-reanized, his perusal of medical literature to even they were obliged to take to a boat. stranger conceptions of what surgery which conveyed them to an island in may be capable of. The result is the Pacific. This was a floating island, strangely reminiscent of the "Mysteries |\_ of Paris" and its successors. We are relieved when the eminent surgeon decides not to graft two new legs on his patient's hips and are surprised at the sudden moral revulsion when the pressure on the brain has been removed.

There will be relief in New Haven and Lawrenceville because Owen John-"The Sixty-first Second" (Frederick A. Stokes Company) deals with New York society exclusively. mystery that attracts the reader is contrived with great ingenuity. At a dinmer party, where every guest is interexted in watching the behavior of one person, a ring is stolen: the hostess endeavors to recover it by a stratagem and apparently fails. Then follows the hunt for the criminal and the ring. As Mr. Johnson knows what has become of It he soon loses interest in the pursuit and turns to describing the effects of a panic on the Stock Exchange and to handling the higher finance. There are few things more wearisome than fictitious business matters. There is also much philandering and many conversations, as bootless as most talk is. When the author has made up his mind to phoon and were taken into San Franstop he allows the young people to marry and explains the matter of the young woman had good reason to loathe By that time the reader's attention has been diverted so often by outside matters that he does not care who took it. It may be that Mr. Johnson intends his people to be portraits.

progressed; by the time they reached the deserted ship she loved him and soon the evidence of his innocence came intends his people to be portraits.

In "The Maxwell Mystery," (J. B.

Lippincott Company) Carolyn Wells, who by this time has learned experience. holds closely to the detection of a murder. The narrator has character, he joins to his detective efforts a habit of going to the suspected person and asking for information in a straightfor-ward way that disposes of the clue. When all possible ones are run to earth, the author calls in her intuitive detective, who at once employs knowledge that has been withheld from the reader to fix the guilt on a person he could not have suspected. That hardly seems fair treatment. The other faults in the story are that the motive is too slight and that the author, having dragged in an English nobleman with an honored historical name, seems utterly at sea as to the proper manner of addressing him or of speaking of him.

The place of the detective is taken in Perceval Gibbon's "The Adventures of Miss Gregory ' (G. P. Putnam's Sons) by an elderly British spinster of great self-possession who wanders about, with sensible equipment, in remote parts of the world. In each adventure she averts calamity from some social derelict or looks on as he meets his fate. The incidents are so slight as to scarcely make a story, but they reveal the character of the person Miss Gregory has in hand clearly and unmistaxably. Incidentally the author describes many curious places. It is extremely well done and ertistic work, far above the average of

Mr. Locke's Tragte Mood.

Little of W. J. Locke's light spirits and delicacy of touch will be discerned in "Stella Maris" (John Lane Company),

#### By the Author of The Prodigal Judge

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ence every week. Her victim, the sentiment have full play. The sordid villainy and love affair, is all clumsy and tragedy of the hero's life is too violent spolls the story. The foreign languages a contrast and the horrible manner in brought in are maltreated painfully.

which it is revealed to the girl as effec-tively wipes out the reader's im-pression of a fairy creature as it does fort in "The Road of Living Men" (J. her own memory of the past; the more so because Mr. Locke while he is concocting his horror almost makes him girl; they are both wanderers about the Boston). all delightful. It is certainly mistaken art and cheap sentiment to free her from her troubles by making her break and ends in rapid flight down the commit a crime, which we imagine that Mr. Locke, nothwithstanding his glorification of it, would hardly venture to

Alice Brown

Author of Vanishing Points

pership of Oliver Herford and Cleveland reports did not testify to her exist- her descriptions of places and peoples, venture is tacked on to the introspece are pleased to note that she dis-covers the inconvenience of rooming and they decide to marry. The hero has rowed bodily from Dickens. She is with bears and are amazed at the free-some interesting friends; the most nota-our old friend the Marchioness, trans-dom that the daughters of the rich en-ble is an educated Chinese who falls in nuted in Mr. Locke's crucible.

To be sure, this particular one has love with an American missionary and Mr. Locke's opportunity lay in showred hair, but it is lucky for her that the is killed off, as it seems, because the young man she makes ardent love to in author is unwilling to have them marry, cess to the common realities of life, the studio should be also a girl. The He is the occasion for much information In that he could let his humor and South American business, revolution, regarding China, Chinese ways of thinking and Chinese policies.

A poor opinion will be formed of the medical profession by the readers of . The specialist who favors his ose sight of her.

earth and do not often meet: he dreams rich patients, who runs his private host.

The awakening of the slum child's of their having loved in previous pital for profit, who steals the ideas of The awakening of the slum child's existences; he gives the impression that in which she develops her own abilities in which she develops her own abilities to something stands in their way. As the in spite of well meant endeavors to form her in a conventional mould, is trasted with him seems likewise objectionable at times. It is not surprising if the heroine gets confused. from the doctors and the reform movement, which form the main part of the book, there are bits of character and of description which are pleasing.

Chapman and published by the John Lane Company, are at hand and nobody uses that word when the truth will serve those who have not the advantage of being able to read the orig- The author has the right idea about the inal French. Few modern French writ- construction of a short story. ers suffer so much in translation as does Anatole France for the language in his readers to in "Three Farms" (Henry which he puts his thoughts is one of his Holt and Company) is of the highly chief charms. A delightful study of popular, contemplative sort that often child psychology is translated by J. takes the form of sitting on the fence Lewis May under the title "My Friend's and whittling while watching others do Book"; the two other volumes contain the work. He relates pleasantly, in the stories of less importance, but interest- language which it is now the fashion to ing and necessary in a complete edi-tion. "The Aspirations of Jean Servien." sions he formed on a great variety of translated by Alfred Allinson, and subjects not connected with farming, in "Jocasta, and The Famished Cat," his Provence, in the Canadian Northwest first work of fiction, translated by Agnes and in Indiana. His sentiments are gen-

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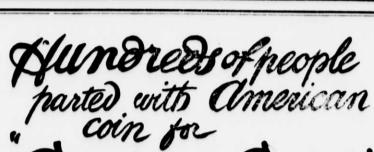


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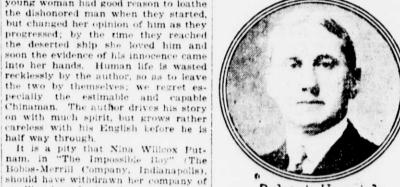
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she should throw them over for a set of them. They meet again on Long Island, spend long hours together and agree to of the youngster, the bear and the red wait till they think it the right time to haired malden is pretty, ad we like the marry. So far, except for the Chinese haired malden is pretty, ad we like the marry." portly lunch wagon man. The author drags us away from the open road very soon to introduce us to the drearlest side of New York life, the would-be bohemians" in studios, restaurants and fighting to save the gold mine of the the like. She takes great pains with girl's father. A story of action and ad-

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